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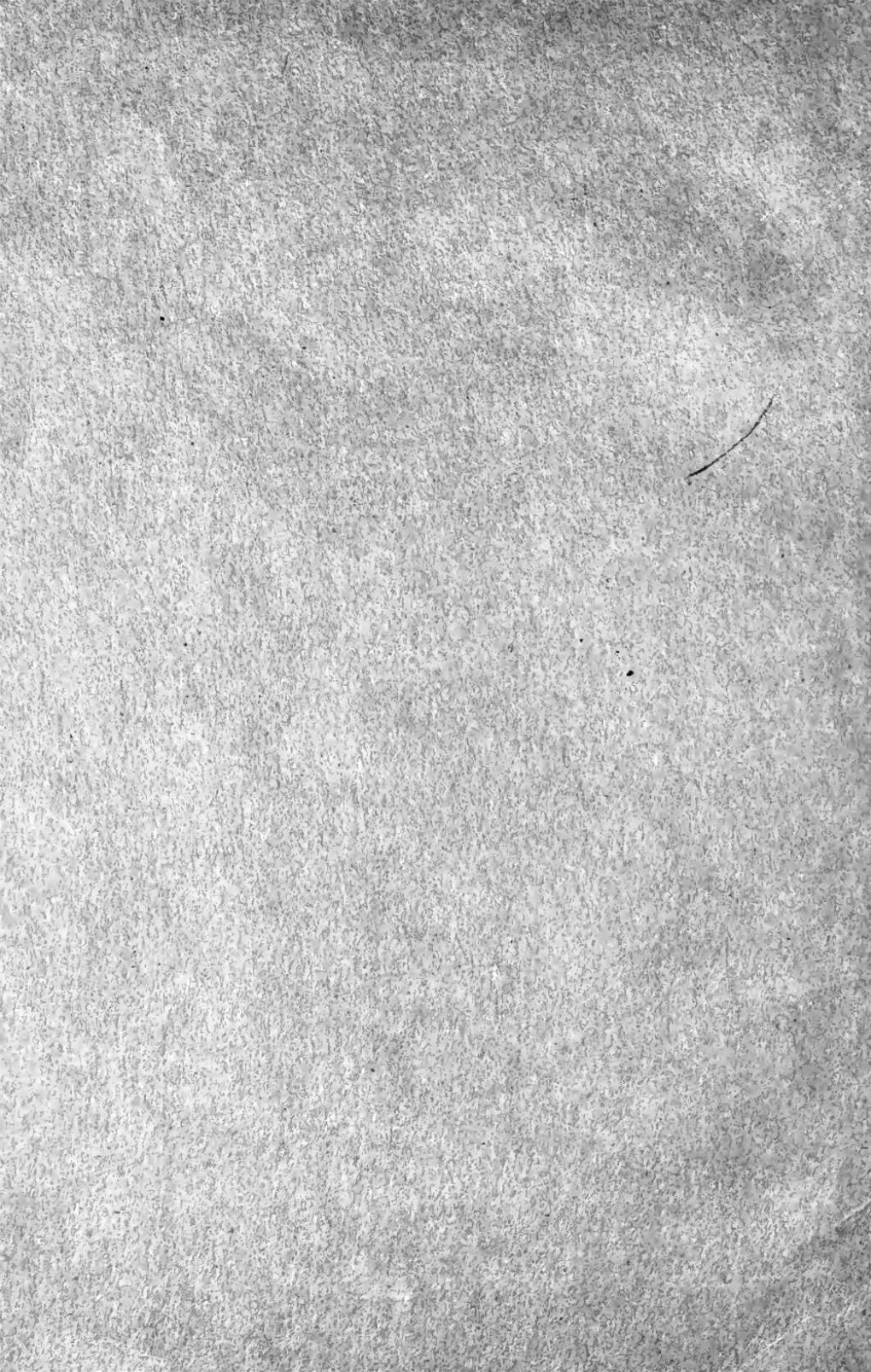
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STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
TRENTON

INTRODUCTION
TO
THE TEACHING
OF
ELEMENTARY
AGRICULTURE

SEPTEMBER, 1912





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NO. 11111
ANNEE 1960

Foreword

Because of the growing interest in country life, attention has been directed to the possibilities of the country school as a means of meeting new industrial and social needs.

The conviction is increasing that wherever practicable, schools should relate part of their work to the dominant activity or pursuit of the community.

It is believed that some of the various farm activities can furnish educational material which will serve to train young people in clear thinking, in initiative, in self-reliance, and in other fundamental virtues which are in the minds of teachers, whatever the school subject or activity.

There is a more or less well defined feeling that the rural school has too long neglected to promote interest in country life. Again, we are beginning, although tardily, to realize the economic necessity of using land more intelligently and skilfully in the production not only of larger food supplies, but better ones. This has been forced upon us as urban population has increased, and the prices of food-stuffs have risen.

All this is particularly true of New Jersey, in view of its unique position in the heart of the most populous region of the country, with great cities at its borders, and a large urban population within its borders.

It may be confessed that there are difficulties in the way of teaching agriculture. Few teachers have been trained to properly teach the subject, there is an absence of plans that have been worked out in school room experience elsewhere and there is in some quarters the traditional objection to undertaking work which seems to be a departure from customary lines.

These objections will disappear after a time; at any rate they are not serious enough to prevent making a beginning, as indeed some schools in the state have already done.

This bulletin presents a plan which it is believed is a practicable one for a large number of schools. It is not a detailed or comprehensive scheme for the whole subject. It is rather a plan for making the necessary beginning by means of some concrete work, chosen out of a large field of possible activities. The co-operation of the community and of the public is needed in all school work; particularly is this true of agriculture, vitally related as it is to the life of the community. Therefore the bulletin suggests ways of securing the interest of persons and organizations who would be likely to help.

No examinations are suggested to test results, but a plan is presented for the rating of schools under the direction of the County Superintendent.

Another point remains to be emphasized. It is possible to relate this work to the other activities of the school—to English, to drawing, to arithmetic, to spelling, etc. Indeed, experience has demonstrated that this relation may be established. Work in agriculture, therefore, may re-enforce the conventional work of the school.

The plan presented is somewhat tentative or experimental in character. Suggestions for improvement from teachers and others would be cordially received.

In the preparation of this bulletin and the special leaflets mentioned therein, acknowledgment is made to Assistant Commissioner Mirick, who has had the co-operation of Dr. K. C. Davis, of the State Experiment Station, and of various county superintendents. The advice of several representative farmers has also been sought, from whom suggestions have been received.

Respectfully,

CALVIN N. KENDALL,

Commissioner of Education.

September, 1912.

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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

The study of agriculture is not compulsory in the schools of the State. This plan is suggested for those schools that elect to adopt it, and it is not intended to displace work of a similar nature already successfully carried on.

The purpose of the course is to engage the school children of the seventh and eighth grades (where it is feasible those of the sixth grade also) in a fundamental human activity, and so to relate this to the study of books that their activity may become increasingly more intelligent and successful.

The course does not consist of a series of information lessons, and does not aim to cover the field of agriculture. Each school that decides to take this course will select one of a few suggested subjects, and make a study of this subject, with the teacher as a fellow student.

A guide for the study will be furnished in a "Leaflet" on the subject chosen. This "Leaflet" will contain suggestions on method of study, on books and bulletins, and on the definite results that should be worked for.

It is one of the purposes of the course to interest community organizations in this part of the school work.

The whole or a part of the time after recess on Friday afternoons may be assigned for this study. If the suggested relations between the study of agriculture and the other school subjects are established, it will frequently find its place in the arithmetic, composition and reading recitations.

General Plan.

The following plan of procedure is suggested to the teacher.

Early in the fall term have a discussion, in which the whole school shares, regarding the industrial activities of the community, for both men and women.

As the discussion progresses have one of the older pupils write a list of these activities on the board.

In the discussion, by means of questions by the teacher, let it become clear that some activities are more fundamental in human life than others. Rewrite the list of activities arranging in the order of their fundamental importance. Briefly present the historic sequence of civilization types—hunting, grazing, crop growing, manufacturing. If the pupils become interested in the historic aspect borrow from the public library Tylor's Anthropology—D. Appleton & Co., and leave it about for them to read and to study the pictures.

In a second lesson discuss in the same informal manner the different forms of agricultural activity in the community. This will naturally lead to a discussion of the development of diversity and specialization in the industrial activity of the world. Reference will be made to the development of diversified life in the history of our own country, to its growth in the family life, to the development of machinery, to the department store, to the examples of diversity or specialization in the locality and in school systems, to the need of diversity in training and occupation for the pupils themselves because of their individual differences, in tastes, ambitions, capacities.

Make a list, as before, of the various forms of agricultural activity covering the working of the land, dairying, marketing, co-operation, of organizations interested in agricultural concerns, State Board of Agriculture, Farmers' Institutes, U. S. Department of Agriculture, State Experiment Station—State Agricultural College, (Rutgers), New Brunswick, The Grange, any local co-operative organization, etc. Assign one of these to each member of the upper classes for them to learn about and report on. One or more of the written composition periods may be given up profitably to the composing and criticising of the written account of the investigations, and to the writing of letters of inquiry to be sent to each of these different organiza-

tions for information and literature regarding the field of interest of each.

In a third lesson the following plan of study and work may be discussed, and a card like the following should be made out and sent to the County Superintendent. (A card for this purpose is enclosed.)

.....	County	Date		
1. Name of school				
2. Number of rooms in the building				
3. Grades in the room which might take this course				
4. Number pupils who might take this course				
Boys,	6th	7th	8th	total.....
Girls,	6th	7th	8th	total.....
5. Name of teacher				
6. Name of President of Board of Education.....				
7. This school will study Subject No.				
Name of Subject				
8. This school will not take agriculture this year.				
(Each school should make out this card and post to the County Superintendent. Cross out either 7 or 8.)				

On receipt of this postal card the County Superintendent will send an outline leaflet on the subject chosen.

This leaflet will contain the plan of work in the subject chosen—suggestions for method of study, material for study, relations with other subjects, English composition, reading, arithmetic, drawing, etc.

The Subjects.

1. Course in General Experimental and Observation work of a simple character.

(This course is planned for schools that have more sixth grade pupils than seventh and eighth grade pupils. In most cases it will be best to select one of the subjects that follow.) (In preparation.)

2. Alfalfa, Cow-peas and Soy-bean Growing. (In preparation.)
3. Corn Growing. (Now ready.)
4. Market Gardening (tomatoes, lettuce, radishes, onions, peas and other vegetables.) (In preparation.)

(A school may emphasize the study of one or two vegetables.)
5. White Potato Growing. (In preparation.)
6. Sweet Potato Growing. (In preparation.)
7. Tomato Growing. (In preparation.)
8. Poultry Raising. (In preparation.)

Every individual, boy and girl, in the seventh and eighth grades of the school that undertakes this course is expected to take part in the agricultural work. The girls need not necessarily have a garden, but they may have a larger responsibility in the school experiments, in the language work, the arithmetic and the drawing, the boys looking out for the mechanical phases. Special suggestions for the girls' activity will be found in each "Leaflet."

Each school will be rated on the work of the school. No examination will be given to ascertain how much each pupil knows. The important question will be "What (not how much) has the school as a whole *done*, in intelligent activity in the field chosen and in interesting the community in its work?" This will involve not only individual work and study, but a school sentiment and spirit that will keep each individual at work and be influential in interesting the community.

The record will be made and signed by the teacher on the "Schedule for the Classification of Work in Elementary Agriculture" attached. This is to be signed also by the President of the

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Board of Education and sent to the County Superintendent. He will appoint a committee to classify the schedules.

The school record will not be the basis for the award of a prize for the "best" school, but will be the basis for the classification of each school in the county as:

- Class A
- Class B
- Non-contesting

Doubtless the local grange or other local organization or interested persons could be induced to give a banner or certificate to every school that secured a rating of Class A.

NOTE.—All of the "Leaflets" are not yet ready for distribution. Schools should indicate on the card sent to County Superintendent the "Subject" chosen and the "Leaflet" will be sent as soon as it can be prepared. The study may be begun at any time during the year.



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